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Photo and design by Michael Zibrowski

Swallow This

Vietnamese teen became role model after 'ecstasy' pills rap, now faces deportation

Five years after arriving in the U.S., Long Two Ho, a Southeast California-based Vietnamese refugee, directed a 2004 music video that would bring him fame and anguish—and, years later, make him the face of a growing crime epidemic in Little Saigon. He exposed the sale of 10,000 banned ecstasy (or MDMA) pills for \$10,000. But the then-17-year-old college student didn't know that one of his co-conspirators

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DR. SCOTT MOXLEY

unwittingly tried to sell the party-circuit drugs to an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent in a Riverside parking lot. That crime produced a staggering 179-months in federal-prison sentences for the seven arrested defendants, given Ho's key role. He faced the harshest potential term: a maximum of 351 months of incarceration. But he negotiated a deal. In exchange for pleading guilty before trial in 2005, the government dropped some charges and reduced his time to 70 months, plus a \$10,000 fine.

Ho later contested the fine and sentence, arguing they were unfairly greater than ones given to his co-defendants. In 2007, a U.S. District Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit panel rejected his complaint. The judges ruled the earlier sentence was reasonable because Ho was "more involved in the conspiracy" than the others, who'd agreed to testify against him. They then upheld the fine.

More than 45 percent of freed inmates in California commit additional crimes and return to custody within three years. After his release in August 2009, Ho proved an exception to that high recidivism rate. He earned education degrees, found a wife in 2011, fathered two boys, managed an Irvine company and earned his own real-estate license that produced around \$100,000 in annual income. He also donated to charities, treated his family to luxury vacations and kept himself out of trouble.

But the Vietnamese incident is now living in a nightmare. Nine years after assuming his freedom and molding himself into a model-green-card resident, Ho was arrested, this time by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents acting on a state September 2008 deportation order the government previously



MECHAL JOHNSON

failed to enforce. During his first year in office, President Barack Obama issued orders to crack down on non-citizens who've committed aggravated felonies as well as convicted Vietnamese to accept more deportation. Has things? About 3,500 Vietnamese living here.

"After Trump's election, everything changed," Ho declared in court. ("Deportation" will permanently separate me from my wife and children. Additionally, I am non-committal because of what they have done to my family. I have made anti-communist posts on my Facebook page, and I am friends on Facebook with actively non-communist persons.")

Ho says one of his grandfathers served as a high-ranking government official in what was South Vietnam and endured prosecution—including the loss of a family estate—when the North Vietnamese communists took over in 1975. Initial efforts by his family to file for asylum through Thailand were unsuccessful. But in 1981, at the age of 12, he made it to Los Angeles with his dad, stepmother and two step-siblings.

To black deportation, Ho hired James D. Riddler, one of Orange County's elite defense attorneys. Riddler campaigned against his client's forced removal as usual. He highlighted Ho's rehabilitation and cooperation to his wife and kids. He even asked prosecution to show compassion by reducing the consequences to an offense that didn't qualify for deportation, but has effects faded.

Undeterred, Riddler last year took the case to U.S. District Court Judge Duke S. Fischer, arguing Ho wouldn't be placed guilty in the non-violent drug case if he'd fully understood the deportation consequences. "Mr. Ho pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute MDMA after being affirmatively misled by his purported criminal-defense counsel that his guilty plea was unlikely to lead to his deportation," Riddler advised Fischer. "Mr. Ho is misled he had been misadvised after the election of Trump, the U.S. Government's ensuing roundup of deportable Vietnamese citizens, and Trump's extensive efforts to ensure that deportable Vietnamese citizens would actually be deported."

Assistant United States Attorney Francis S. Lewis believed Ho hadn't been misled, wondered why he'd waited 12 years to challenge the conviction and urged his deportation. "As his [2005] sentencing, Ho unsuccessfully argued for a downward variance [from 70 months to 44 months of incarceration] before this court, so, in part, because he feared deportation to Vietnam after his release," Lewis told the judge. "ICE initiated removal proceedings after he served his 70-month sentence. In those proceedings, the defendant requested immediate removal to Vietnam, stating under penalty of perjury that he understood he was removable and that he did not believe he would be persecuted or harmed if he returned to his home country."

According to Lewis, Ho signed a 2009 document that guaranteed he would leave and not re-enter the U.S. for 30 years without permission from the Attorney General. He also "has not provided any evidence that the government would have permitted him to plead to a non-deportable offense or that he would have initiated an appeal to trial when all six of his co-defendants pleaded guilty before trial," also observed.

Last July, Fischer sided with Lewis. "While Ho asserts that he would have proceeded to trial if he had known that deportation was 'unadvisable,' the court finds this assertion to be incredible on its face and that there was no reasonable probability that he would have proceeded to trial. Ho was facing a sentencing guideline range of 111 to 141 months if he had gone to trial, but the judge's agreement lowered his range to 70 to 85 months. It is not possible that he would have gone to trial with a strong chance of conviction and an additional 40-plus-month prison sentence in exchange for a small chance of acquittal and escape from deportation."

Ho—who is being held in a federal detention center in San Bernardino—likely will be deported in the coming days. Agents have asked him to have his bags prepared for the one-way trip. His flight ended coverage on April 16 in Little Saigon's Nyon Viet, the largest Vietnamese-language daily newspaper in the nation. The paper published numerous endorsing photos of Ho, his family, and quotes from him with almost his exuberance, and a story ending that goes like this in translation: "America is extremely business, but America is also cruel for what is happening to families like Ho's."

Some people see this deportation as income-producing.

"[Ho's] deportation and passage abroad is building a better community by the perfect example of people who make a mistake in life, who paid for it through incarceration and, most important, who turned their terrible experiences into something beneficial to save lives," according to Trump Nguyen, founder of Aikers and Pacific Islanders for Story of Orange County (APIOC), a nonprofit group that helps immigrants find a way to be outside of prison. "The community needs people like Ho."

SCOTT MOXLEY@COWWEEKLY

a clockwork orange))

Knott's Affordable

It isn't hard to suppose anyone, the cost of a day at Disneyland away more expensive than a day at Knott's Berry Farm, according to a new survey.

More eye-opening is the report from vacation-planning website Home-Talk (homework.com) as that the Buena Vista theme park is the most affordable theme park in California. Home-Talk's California Theme Park Index is based on the average costs each member of a family of four would pay for parking, admission tickets, meals and overnight lodging on June 1. Added in is the flat parking fee for each park.

The average Knott's stay is pegged at \$29 per family member while it's \$45 for either Disneyland or Disney California Adventure. Amazingly, then, at a theme park in the state with an even higher average than the Anaheim industry trend-setter is Universal Studios Hollywood, which would eat each family member back \$50.

That's largely thanks to hotel or rental rooms at Los Angeles near Universal Studios costing an average of \$60 per night. After average of \$100 per night for all four family members, overnight lodging near Knott's is the least expensive among

the theme parks in the state. For Disney's Anaheim parks, it's \$220. The highest hotel rate in the state is \$300 near California's Great America theme park in Santa Clara.

However, when it comes solely to admission, that Day Area attraction has the cheapest ticket in the state at \$40, according to the survey, which has the Disney parks being California's most expensive at \$119 each.

At \$20, the parking pass at Knott's is among the most affordable in the state.

If your family is on a Knott's budget, but you want to venture to other California theme parks, the next two most affordable are Six Flags Magic Mountain (\$38) in Valencia and Six Flags Discovery Kingdom (\$38) in Vallejo. But Six Flags Discovery Kingdom also has the most expensive parking in the state at \$30.

None of the Orange County theme parks topped a separate Home-Talk California-based search for Six Flags Magic Mountain as the most thrilling theme park, according to the vacation planner, who gave California's Great America second and SeaWorld at No. 3.

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Hey You!

& ANONYMOUS

Chumming the Waters

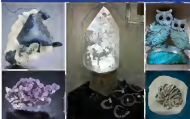
You are the neighbor whose yard is next to mine. My wife and I were coming home, soon at sea, after a fun night on the town when our romantic interlude was rudely interrupted by a roar. I can only describe as something out of a bad science-fiction movie. You were hanging over the side of your boat above a rapidly

spreading trail of whatever dinner or drink disgorged with you. Thanks for reminding me of the merits of moderation, but please stop feeding the sharks.

NRK 10/20 Send in anonymous tips, confessions or accusations – changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent – to “Hey You!” via OC Weekly 18415 Squalier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at info@ocweekly.com.

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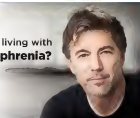


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ALL ACCESS

LOOKING BACK ON 20 YEARS OF COVERING
THE NEWPORT BEACH FILM FEST

BY MATT COKER



This is a 20th anniversary Newport Beach Film Fest (NBFF) is happening Thursday, April 21 through May 2 in a meeting when you consider the cinematographer's humble beginnings. These had been a Newport Beach International Film Festival, which went belly-up in 1999 after a four-year run, leaving unpaid vendors, pissed-off volunteers and much ill will in its wake.

However, Gregg Schwab, an investment banker and Newport Harbor High School graduate, and Yael Quatman, the pride of Irvine's Woodbridge High working as marketing as a San Diego transplant, still believed a viable film festival was viable, even in Hollywood's back yard.

"We were not big state-mentmen guys starting this up," Quatman says at NBFF's headquarters off Quail Street, "but we had a love for this community."

Such love acutely would not be enough to convince city leaders and union-bureau representatives to buy into an assumed film-festival movie vision, especially after we so recently crashed and burned. But a funny thing happened at Newport Beach City Hall: Schwab and Quatman were welcomed with open arms. And coffee.

"Thank God for the city," Quatman says.
"Without the city and the City Council, it would not be happening," Schwab agrees during a separate interview.

After the official blessing came the really hard part: starting a new festival. "Reinventing" was dropped from the name, but not from the mission to present global programming, and a jaded competition to honor film excellence was launched. Schwab remembers working not with Quatman how they would acquire opening funds as they sat in the investment banker's 30th-floor office at Citibank.

A fly affair arose from Mike Wayne Airport was disarrayed to the festival. Looking around the money trail, quite by now shared with another festival employee, Quatman estimated NBFF's first headquarters on both was stuffed with business, promotional materials, stacks of videos and decks on top of one another—"It was literally the size of this room," which just happens to be around the corner from the original space.

Schwab, then his current office, which is not as large as Quatman's (but there is only one of him), recalls at first having only two computers and two phones in the original 100 1/2th floor were in use, you'd have to wait until a phone was hanging up before making a call out.

"When they were showing us the office," Schwab says, "there was a copy machine. I asked, 'Do we get the copy machine?' We had that copier for 15 years. How far we've come."

How far, indeed. Thanks to a team of mostly volunteers who hit established festivals such as Palm Springs, Sundance and Toronto International, introduced themselves to filmmakers, and lobbied to get their movies to a place most had never heard of, NBFF has come to become the largest film festival between San Diego and Los Angeles, the biggest in Southern California celebrating a 20-year anniversary, and a MovieWeek magazine choice as an annual fest worth a filmmaker's entry fee.

In this was very important in the beginning," Quatman says. "We had our hat in our hands for a lot of things. I used to rent out nights for opening night and festival parties in San Diego, put them in the back of my car and drive them to Newport. There was no money to have these deliveries. If some in my car, take them out, plug them in, and then take them to the next event. That's how we rolled."

In the early days, films arrived as 16mm prints in such heavy containers that much of the festival budget had to be dedicated to the postage to mail them and to the able-bodied who could hand-deliver them. Entries later arrived as much lighter VHS tapes, but there was also necessitated the painstaking process of shipping into every type commercial for sponsors and the annual NBFF trailer that provides such program.

When I first volunteered to be an NBFF staffer, I picked up a gift bag filled with volunteer submissions, which I was to watch via my home VCR before mixing each film on a sheet of paper that I was to turn in when I returned the bag.

I grabbed one began my way to the Bay Area for Thanksgiving last, overcome by vacation brain, I left it in the back of a San Francisco taxi, something I did not realize

until hours later. Convinced that, at best, I would be fired as a volunteer as, at worst, face a prison term (how you used to see a prison term on the FBI press writings?), I sheepishly called in only company, and to my utter amazement, the driver arrived at the door with the gill bag.

"Thinking back to the days of VH1 tapes, I'm kind of getting a knot in my stomach about it," Quatrone says. "It was humbling. We did not know any other way."

Later as my screener comes, as DVD players started overhauling the consumer market, discs began filtering into those gill bags. Later, you get a choice of all tapes, all DVDs or mixed. Then the VH1 tapes disappeared altogether; later, no did the gill bags. Today's festival screeners rely on an online "key" that includes links to content that can be played on laptops and, if it were advisable, in projection rooms. "Thinkability, as we've grown," Quatrone says, "the process bag'll become more sophisticated."

The NEFF has gained a reputation for off-the-book opening-night plays, after-parties and dining-right blowouts. Muldoon's Irish Pub, which's behind Big Newport, always the place for the Irish Spotlight films' after-parties, which is my humble opinion are the finest NEFF after-party parties. Schwank recalls that he popped into Muldoon's on an errand just days after one Irish Spotlight party he found an Eastern Isle film cut and crew were still discussing the gill bag. "I asked them, 'Don't you go over the line?'"

Thru with choosing one, all-time favorite festival memory, Schwank did not like a party or even a film screening, but rather the night in 2001 the NEFF honored "a director's director."

"One of the greatest things was listening to Robert Wise talk about editing," he says of the line director of *West Side Story*, *The Sound of Music* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (and no many other). Before sliding into the director's chair, Wise had ordered Cullen Kane, *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (among many others). The conversation led to NEFF working with the Motion Picture Editors Guild to bring other top Hollywood editors to speak at later festivals and establish editing workshops. This formula was repeated for contemporary music and screenwriting.

In 2004, at year one, about 15,000 people showed up for 45 feature films and 100 shorts that rolled over six days. By the 2002 fest, 16,500 filmgoers were held by 72 features and 120 shorts from 27 countries over nine days. One highlight from that first "fest was absolutely insane," according to Quatrone. "We had the *Polsera* 20th-anniversary showing with acoustic it will cards at the Lido, and then, at the Mudd Rock, an *Acoustic with John Waters* with a live band. People were hanging on every word coming out of his mouth."

Happily, neither Waters nor Quatrone recalls the day that Woody made Chris

Stieglitz was hired from the event. He and three friends were standing front and center, punning happily (and drunkenly) to one another about how glad they were to see the famous gross-out filmmaker, forcing Waters to walk them at least four times to shut up. Enter the security guards who tossed Stieglitz, who was bewildered at the time.



With his patented two-fingered typing style, after having secured up from being "a Gross. Wilfrid sort of drunk that night staked out all but the most essential bits of glass." Bagler bagged out the following: "[T]he way I remember it—as the way I remember the party I remember—is nothing but lovely times and John Waters went his party band and two big dudes to sit me up by the under-the-mat just like the movie—was out on my actual act, which is something that should happen to everyone at least once so you can witness knowledge when you see it happen screen to film island."

Everyone agrees that the 2005 festival was the real game changer because NEFF used at the Toronto International Film Festival had been only criticized for a line-known LA drama going with local tourists. That led to the UK premiere screening at NEFF of *Crash*, which would go on 11 months later to win the Best Picture Oscar.

"That was the year that catapulted us to the national stage," Quatrone says. "It was pretty cool."

I thought it was pretty cool too. *Alcohol* (which on trials were being served at the Hudson Island opening-night gala that screening. At I stood at the end of a

ling line to the outdoor bar, a bright light clicked on for an attempt, on-camera interview with *Crash* writer/director Paul Haggis, who stood about 2 feet from me. The product in me probably should have fired from some pointed questions.



about his controversial film, but I didn't need to get his drink on. I'm beginning to detect a theme with Woody reporters at the festival!

Having premiered a top Academy Award winner had Hollywood calling the NEFF festival to schedule films during the 2005 festival, in opposed to the other way around, as it had been in the previous years. Heading into that NEFF, the Woody received gross releases from film studios and distributors announcing their intent had been selection made—with each noting this was the same festival that permitted *Crash*.

Schwank's "big highlight" was "hearing Richard Sherman play music, considering he and his brother composed the songbook for most children's shows."

Richard and Robert Sherman are famous for their songs in Disney movies, although their most famous tune is "It's a Small World (After All)" for the Disneyland ride. The festival honored Richard Sherman, and afterwards I had him to be "back a great musician. I'll talk about how he wrote songs while talking with Walk (Haggis) for a nation picture, and then... he'd sit down at the piano and

play every song. Wow! That was such a rare opportunity with someone who had influenced so many people."

Festival staffers for the 10th anniversary NEFF in 2009 paddled one into checking out a little little dreamily called *Spooner*. It was directed by former Santa Ana resident Derek Doorman and starred former *Trauma* musician Matthew Lillard in the title role.

As I was trying without success to arrange a press interview, I was contacted by Doorman's mother, Cheryl Kerr, whom I'd conversed with for years because the former Goodwilling founded and runs the Santa Ana-based Orange County Center for Improv-comedy troupe. This time, Kerr didn't want *Critics* coverage, she wanted *Spooner* coverage.

Without having seen the film, I heardpell into Kerr and Doorman at a pre-festival party for directors. I explained I needed to see the film so I could ask intelligent questions for a "home-town-boy-does-good" story. Doorman hand-delivered a screener the next morning, explaining the earlier delay was caused by a producer fearing the film was getting overexposed before its playtime.

I was opposed to one of the best, freshest and quietest romantic comedies I had seen in a long, long time. But the festival had by then opened, and I was relying upon the deadline gun, running around a story before *Spooner*'s playtime. In the festival's hospital scene, which had computers to show, I checked my results for Doorman's call number and, getting ready to punch in the number, overheard someone in the bag next to me say "Matt." Looking at the next-door computer screen, I saw a publicity still of Lillard from *Spooner* and, bending my neck around, spotted Doorman and his co-writer Richard Williams.

We did the interview right there, the *Spooner* story made the deadline, and it led to me tagging along with Doorman and his car and crew for his next picture, *Doorknob*, to the 2010 Sundance Film Festival for a Woody cover story. (A *glance*, framed copy of a cover with John Lillards' portrait of Doorman hangs in our Fountain Valley office.) The following year, Doorman's *Late July* won Sundance's Grand Jury Prize, a journey covered in real time for the Woody by *Canons* of *Mat's* New York Jones, who co-starred in *Doorknob*. Jones and his childhood pal Doorman wrote *Late July*, which starred Aaron Tishler. Doorman is back at NEFF this year as the producer of a documentary about the late actor, *Love, Antonio*.

I don't recall Schwank ever sounding fearful he might not be able to pull off a festival until 2002. Just before Christmas, the Irvine Co. revealed out of the blue that the on-screen Edwards Island Cinema at Hudson Island would undergo rounds of remodeling, such as the destiny of Schwank's NEFF schedule matters. City funding dented the festival he co-chaired.

IN CONTRAST ON PAGE 10

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BY FRANK PAGE

to Newport Beach, but were combined, the Lido, Edwards Bay Newport and pop-up spots such as the Orange County Museum of Art did not have enough screen for 300-plus films.

With opening night weeks long, Schwank latched around the idea of taking the year off, but he found such a campaign would be the death of a festival that relied on year-to-year momentum. Close to zero hour, and after much pleading, Schwank got the city to agree to allow festival screenings just across the Newport Beach border, at Starlight Triangle Square Cinema in Costa Mesa.

The 2013 run would attract 5,000 ticket buyers, who were already unaware the festival came close to shutting down, possibly forever. What was the Lido? Fashion Island luxury cinema at-risk as the NIFF station, along with the Lido, Big Newport and Starlight Triangle Square.

Speaking for a second Lido Theatre house during NIFF 2013, Aaron Korkin whipped out cue-cards and floppy disks concerning his career as a playwright, Emmy-winning television writer (*The West Wing*) and Oscar-winning film writer (*The Social Network*). He spoke about his past projects, new projects and named projects he acknowledged, "I've been accused of writing dialogue like a guy on a first date desperately trying to get a second date. And [I'd] probably won't." He received approving applause after saying, "I'd love to see a day come when people go to a movie because of who wrote it."

I recall it being very inspiring, and it's also one of the 20-year highlights cited by Schwank, who let me sit on a screen he was able to connect with. Surfer became his assistant in the daughter of the NIFF CEO's high-grade teacher. "She told me, 'Mrs. Carpenter says it's Hollywood. It's who you know.'"

The unofficial highlight of that year's NIFF, which came the night before Anika, was Andy Dick's showing up drunk at his as at the Newport Lido's leadership after-party, just before midnight. The comic actor swapped his pants, took out his junk, started rubbing himself against a table, went inside a display booth, peed, and then tore the booth down. He was last seen crawling on decorative rubber plants.

Whether a decade, though, the 2013 festival goes down as the glitchiest NIFF to date. The first sign there was trouble came on the second night, as folks stood in line atop the Fashion Island parking structure for half an hour after the scheduled start time in Island Cinema of the movie *Black Swan*. Finally informed the scheduling crew after the screening of the best from director David Mamet, whose *Glengarry Glen Ross* opened the 2009 NIFF, was cancelled. Kristen Bellon rolled at Island

Cinema the next night, after its audience had to wait a half-hour beyond its scheduled start time. Like *Virg*, another film that screened at Island Cinema that night, *Broken English* was possibly lost or dropped abroad. The next night, John Schwank's *Actor* and *Frank* was a no-show at the same theater although the film starring Frank Langella went onto fill a closing-night slot.

Some interruptions were caused by film distributors being protective of movies headed for theatrical release, but most were attributed to projection equipment at the time being unable to play Blu-ray versions of the films. Quantum attended one screening where that was the problem. "I remember being absolutely devastated the film was not playing correctly," he says. "I had a packed theater. My heart went out to them. They had patrons there as they could go out for the night. We made sure we made good, that everyone left happy."

At a different showing, a screenwriter saved the program by whipping out a DVD he had on hand to replace the Blu-ray, although the result seemed more guilty and "like not copy" messages flashed. The audience didn't seem to care, including the one at home on NIFF's first "online festival," with digital versions of select motion pictures available for viewing on the web.

The biggest news at the Newport Beach Film Fest opened its 10th run in 2014 had nothing to do with the world premiere of the new movie, but starting Matt LeBlanc and everything to do with. Almost no longer being the official media sponsor. After more years and lawsuits than I can remember, the covered site was being filled by *Touch*'s *Handmade* *Yoda*, which back then was a little-known tape from Moxie/Black & White in Austin, Texas. The *Touch*-NIFF relationship is still going strong. "They're growing well," Quantum says. "Everyone at *Touch* knows us by name."

During the 2013 NIFF, I conducted a fascinating discussion with scholars from UC Irvine and Orange Coast College as part of the Oren Wiles Centennial Tribute. As I was leaving, I could see the Island Cinema lobby that David Harris was going to phone against the NIFF building, like a movie star or something. Schwank had just led a separate talk in a different theater with the actor and son of the late, great Richard Harris about his amazing career (*Mut* Men, *Lincoln* and more, many more).

As Schwank and Harris walked outside, I bumped into my pal Leslie Fiedler—the NIFF director of Special Programs & Community Cinema, who'd attended me past for our annual photo (though we're usually movie stars or something). After I broke the camera, I headed outside and unknowingly into Schwank, who quickly called me over to meet his father.

I told Harris how much I enjoyed his interview on the NIFF With Marc Marc podcast, which was recorded as

the standup-comedian's Highland Park garage. The actor replied that Morris was a rather "savage fellow" who seemed shy and withdrawn in his kitchen before the interview, but once the mic was hot, he lit up. I then told Morris I had just read he directed the *Mad Men* episode that was airing that night. After Morris informed me there were only three episodes of the much-lauded series left, I got nervous and, after an uncomfortable pause, blurted out something about how great he was on the show—along the lines of “Remember when you were hanging on the door?” That was awesome! That caused a look of “Oh, no, funny” to come over Morris’ face as I heard Schwenk remark, “Good needs to get to his roots.”

the closing-night picture, John Hyman’s *All Square*, which is about a small town’s border (Michael Kelly of *House of Cards*) taking action on Table Las Vegas’ terms. WFMT Director of Programming Sandy Slogers asked if when she told me, “It’s really, really funny.”



I doubt anyone could have predicted how well *Derry Old Whiskey* would do at NIFF 2016. Producer/director Tim Burchless had mounted a Kickstarter campaign to fund his documentary on Newport Beach’s world-famous surf break at the end of the Golden Weekends. Burchless, who programs the action-sports movies, knew local surf films historically sell out their debut screening, which leads to a second, but interest was so intense so early for Burchless’ film project that three showings were scheduled before the festival even opened, and tickets to all of them were snatched up.

Fortunately, *Derry Old Whiskey* is a damn fine movie, giving a historical perspective on the mammoth-surf phenomenon and its, uh, shies, fervent protection. Quality over business-as-usual: why a fourth screening was added during the festival, it, too, immediately sold out. Facing the beaming audience at the Lido Theatre, Schwenk announced that the sports-sports documentary had just become the biggest ticket seller in the festival’s 15-year history. An unprecedented fifth and final showing was also scheduled.

Last year, NIFF was loaded with comedy, so much so that the *Wholly* played up their programming decision and featured an image on the cover from *Style Magazine’s Adventures in Public Defecation*, which would be making its world premiere in Newport. Unfortunately, in the sobering atmosphere of a deflated comedy, I found *Midwest* and Josh Kipner’s essay about the relationship between a smothering mother (*Why I Hate*) and her son’s suicide (based on *David’s Dilemma*) a rare. That’s the thing about film festivals: Movies that read promising on paper (or cellphone) don’t always deliver. But when it comes to

The 36th-annual Newport Beach Film Fest brings 300-plus films from 50 countries to our shores starting Thursday, April 25. Local, the opening-night picture, an already sold out if you just wanted to see the movie, but you can still get in with a \$215 package deal that includes the gala afterward, when free food, Tito’s (and other booze) and entertainment will be served.

The May 2 closing-night documentary, *Part of Water*, is about Ben Clarkson, the Newport Beach lifeguard who died saving a drowning swimmer. Let us hope the Lido is well-stocked with blankets for that one.

As we speak about four weeks before NIFF 2016, Schwenk recognized the time we were in. “Even after 33 years, you plan and plan and plan, and now it’s a little calm before the storm.”

It emerges from that storm such as *Reflections*, Festival Director Rob Hachick and Director of Shorts Programming Denise Taylor “have been with us 10 to 12 years-plus, and they are still excited to be here. They are still excited finding and reviewing films. In some cases, they are just as passionate, if not more so, than when they started.”

We then thought back to all the times NIFF has featured films from foreign countries, which bring their respective representatives to Newport Beach—as well as their native audiences. “I love that. That’s truly what we wanted 20 years ago,” Schwenk says. “It’s not our festival. It’s everyone’s festival.”

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE NEWPORT BEACH FILM FEST, including screening times, locations and showtimes, visit newportbeachfilmfest.com or find the special insert in this issue.

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newportbeachboatshow.com



(tuesday)
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fri/04/26

(FOOD & DRINK)

Winos Forever California Wine Festival

Real old Ang[®] Pub-house The California Wine Festival is anything but basic. It starts today with the ultra-luxury Sunset Room & Reserve Tasting event, during which guests can enjoy cups of "hard-to-find trophy wines" while gazing at the Pacific. There's a dress code for this one, so come in whatever you'd wear if you were going to be in the background of a *Real Housewives* cocktail party/light scene. The delights continue Saturday with the Beachside Wine Fest at Lantana Bay Park, which is a little more casual, with guests choosing samples from hundreds of wines (and beers) available, plus a ton of food. That is, unless you drink too much trophy wine the night before.

California Wine Festival at Dana Point Tackle Club, 24,599 Dana Dr., Dana Point, (949) 996-2600; www.californiawinefestival.com, 6:30 p.m.; also Sat.-Sun. \$70-\$75; designated drivers, \$35
—DAN DEWITT

(THEATER)

All's Fair in Love and War

Exit, Pursued By a Bear

Every couple has their own way of working through marital issues, from therapy to long conversations. But if you're Nan as Lauren Gundacker's *Exit, Pursued By a Bear*, your methods are a little...unorthodox. In this comedic coverage play, Nan confronts her disloyal husband, Kyle, by tying him to his L&L Boy on her bar one night; she then enlists her friend Susan and a stripper named Burdette in helping her re-express herself from their relationship for tea-viewing. Kyle also faces an ultimatum (if he doesn't choose to work on himself and see Nan's point of view, he will be eaten by a bear. And with the whole room dressed with rare meat and honey, Nan is serious, too).

Exit, Pursued By a Bear at Long Beach Playhouse, 3033 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 424-4211; www.playhouse.org, 8 p.m. Through May 25; \$20-\$30
—AMAZINGRADIO

sat/04/27

(HEALTH & FITNESS)

*DON'T STOP THE MUSIC Night Nation Run

If you enjoy the excitement of running a marathon but have neither the experience nor inclination to actually participate, then watch your chance to get in on the passion flames, as they Night Nation Run. The Youngest event makes a stop at Angel Stadium, so spectators are invited (the opening at various stops along the way, light shows, bubble zones, a neon and blacklight show, a huge music festival, and party area waiting for you at the finish line. Inexpensive runners are welcome to walk, jog, dance or jog throughout the beyond training course (with various staff stations throughout of course). A portion of funds from each Night Nation Run goes toward Stand Up to Cancer, which promotes cancer research.

Night Nation Run at Angel Stadium, 2001 S. Civic Ave./Village Ave., (714) 940-3000; nightnationrun.com, 8 p.m. \$25-\$50 —JAMES MULLIGAN

(FESTIVAL)

Pop-Punk Parade Back to the Beach

If you're down for some fun in the sun while making a year favorite (most of Southern) pop-punk, then Back to the Beach isn't calling the check back too far—just enough to have you long for the past's heyday. Headlined by Blink-182, with a set that Mark Hoppus says may include a performance of *Downs* of the state in full, this KROQ-organized event is usually fairly family-friendly (kids younger than 10 are free, so if you're down to introduce your youngsters to the likes of Goldfinger (with processed parents), Bad Religion, Save Ferris, Less Than Jake, the Aquabats, the Wonder Years and Streetlight Manifesto, then this is a safe, sterile environment in which to do so. You never know which special guests from OC history might pop up.

Back to the Beach at Huntington State Beach, 23401 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, backtothebeachfest.com, Noon, also Sun. \$39.99-\$219.99
—INFORMING PEOPLE

[COMEDY]

When Hari Met Brea

Hari Kondabolu

Wing up your weekend with an hour of intellectual blemish. Queens-raised comedian Hari Kondabolu takes the Times Improv stage a year after his special, *Wine Wars* (Amazon, Amazon on Netflix). Whether he's being heckled by Tracy Morgan, chased by bats, or expressing his

deep love of mango, Kondabolu opens your mind and leaves you laughing for days. He was hosted by *The New York Times* as "one of the most exciting political comics in standup today" and has sold out multiple headlining tours. With tickets going for only \$20, this is a can't-miss event.

Hari Kondabolu at the Times Improv, 180 S. Wess St., Tues. (714) 463-0760, improv.com/times. 7 p.m. \$20-18+.

—MICHAEL HONANES

[FESTIVALS]

The Fine Print

Print Fair & Festival

The Museum of Latin American Art hosts its first Print Fair & Festival to support its current exhibition, "Gráfica America." Diverse printmaking artists will be highlighted in several workshops and demonstrations, along with panel discussions on such topics as "Gender Printmaking

and Activism" and how the process contributes to community building. Some workshops feature gelatin mono printing and Cyanotype printing, so come add to your artistic repertoire with these and more forms of the craft. Other items on the agenda include live performances and face painting.

Print Fair & Festival at Museum of Latin American Art, 615 Alhambra Ave., Long Beach, (562) 437-6469, www.molaa.org. 11 a.m. Free. —GLENN SHARIT



ARTISTS

JOHNNY ASHBAUGH • FREEHUMANITY • BODECK HERNANDEZ
DARREN HOSTETTER • JASON KEAM • CYNTHIA LUJAN
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mon/04/29

[TRIVIA]

Back to Pawnee

Parks and Rec Trivia Night

Twenty-six'll to town: *Parks and Rec* trivia night at Alex's Bar. (E) Mo April Lodge, you know games that turn people against one another, then grab this trivia and get ready to put your pop-culture knowledge to the test. The adorably hilarious show is full of scintillating questions and quotes, so beware of Parks and Rec die-hards. Unfortunately, *Parks and Rec* won't be available for purchase, but there will be happy hour specials all night long.

Parks and Rec Trivia Night at Alex's Bar, 2012 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 434-0762, www.alexsbart.com. 8 p.m. \$8-12+

—LAUREN GAJANA

tue/04/30

[CONCERT]

At Your Door

Chromatic

Portland, Oregon's Chromatics are passing through Orange County during their *Desire & In Memory* Double Exposure Tour and we're totally here for it. Although their early career was the group dabble in indie and lo-fi punk, the quartet now rely on heavy synthwave for a haunting sound, so much so they were featured in an episode of David Lynch's recent season of *Twin Peaks* (and rightfully so—lead vocalist/guitarist/synth player Ruth Radelet has the icy harmonies of Aaliyah Greene, making these melodies in the show after perfection). Their wonderful dream-pop sound just begs to be heard in person.

Chromatic at the Observatory, 1033 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 967-0600, observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. \$35.50.

—AMEE WUJLID

wed/05/01



PHOTO: AL GUARDINO

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Jungle Fest

Costa is on parade next week at Inland's Jungle nursery's annual open house, *Jungle Fest!* Find out your water-sucking lawn? Planting poles that don't really pass the stress test? Now's your chance to shed your squareness and dress up your front and back landscapes with fabulous plants things that truly reflect your inner adventure. Slip on comfortable shoes (the nursery is located on a dirt lot) and join other sipping horticulturalists for workshops, games, prizes and special discounts—with plenty of food trucks on hand to keep you fueled up and shopping. Your fanny may be your castle, but your yard doesn't have to be a wasteland, so go get your way too far out and water your soon-to-be wacky new neighbors!

Jungle Fest at Inland Jungle: 2600 S. Birch St., Santa Ana, (714) 550-8027, www.inlandjungle.com. 11 a.m. Free, but RSVP required. —BT CARIN

thu/05/02

[HISTORY]

A Spirited Occasion The Original Black Star Canyon Ghost Walk

Tells looking for a spooky, spookily bling you will get a kick out of the Original Black Star Canyon Ghost Walk. Though other walking tours of OC's allegedly haunted Black Star Canyon are out there, OC Ghost and Legends proclaims it's the "1st and Original" one. There are no costumes or props, but costumes certainly Black Star Canyon is the source of "disembodied voices, strange light anomalies" and other paranormal phenomena that challenge reason. The tour is available those times throughout May for those who wish to venture forth into the darkness.

Original Black Star Canyon Ghost Walk at Black Star Canyon, Silverado, (949) 662-2667, www.oghostandlegends.com, 5:30 p.m. \$22-\$25. —SCOTT HENSLERT



COURTESY

CAN'T BE TAMED Broncho

Even if you want to catalog the Oscar-nominated Broncho within the desktop game, their week musical output says otherwise. The group produces tunes that blend instrument such as New Wave, art punk, electronic, folk, pop and other experiments, but they finance it all so clearly the result is something that just makes you want to dance. Music writers and critics could easily spend a sizeable word count exploring the technical wonders at going, but the simplicity remains the same: infectious rhythms and emotional beats that instantly hook you. Broncho's music has also been featured in television commercials and on NBC's *Girls*, proving their appeal transcends decades. Catch them tonight at the Wayfarer with fellow musical miscreants Los Mystereaux and Kevlar. Broncho with Los Mystereaux and Kevlar at the Wayfarer, 245 W. 15th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 734-0330, wayfarer.com. 8 p.m. \$15-24. —AMIE MURIEL

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[FILM]

Speak of the Devil I Trapped the Devil

Although *I Trapped the Devil* takes place during Christmas, it's far from a traditional, feel-good holiday movie (in the title, suppress). Matt and his wife, Kari, pay an unexpected visit to his estranged brother, Steve, to celebrate the holidays. At first, they notice that Steve is acting peculiar and that his house is a mess, but it doesn't take long for him to confess that he is actually holding a man (whom he believes to be the devil) captive in his basement. The film then sets off through a series of coincidences and psychological plot twists, as Steve's accusation becomes increasingly convincing. Sure, this is technically a Christmas horror film, but don't expect any Christmas.

I Trapped the Devil at the Ende Cinema, 365 E. Fourth St., Ste. 100, Santa Ana, (714) 285-9432, theendecinema.org. 10 p.m. \$7-\$10. —STEVE DEAGNANO

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PHOTO BY MICHELLE GOODMAN

Of Rice and Ramen

Nishi Poke & Ramen Bistro does both ramen and build-your-own poke in Buena Park

BY EDWIN GOE

I first encountered Nishi Poke & Ramen three years ago in L.A.—well, really, it was Rancho Park, a neighborhood I can honestly say I'd never heard of. A friend told me about the eatery, and I was immediately intrigued, as Southern Californians create with build-your-own poke joints and ramen shops, this restaurant was among the first I've seen that stranges-to-do both. Ramen and DIY poke are two vastly different operating models. So this was a completely new concept, a two-in-one. It was as though Chicago's started offering burgers.

The restaurant was set up exactly as I thought it would be. The poke bar was on one side, and the ramen counter, with an oven menu, was on the other. That the dining room resembled a very charming upstart ramen franchise stretched at consumption an decorated with walls of blackboard, I could tell the owner wanted to be welcoming, making the restaurant sunny, cheery and fashionable for many, rich and infamous Westside. Even the poke assembly line was upgraded. It offered not only the usuals of fish, salmon and shrimp, but also trout, which, in my opinion, is as good as lobster. In addition, there were complimentary toppings I'd never seen before, such as mackerel, as well as some I have, such as Hot Chilies.

While I liked the poke, I found the ramen more. The noodles hit the chewy sweet spot not too firm, not too soft. And they're substantial—thick, almost submarine—with the consistency of the Chinese, hand-pulled variety. And I knew I was in for a treat when I saw the chef's plate of fat-limiting shoyu the creamy 20-lb-weighed tonkotsu broth. There were

other good things, including two pieces of generously thick, braised pork belly cooked with charred edges.

Since my visit, Nishi Poke & Ramen has expanded. It now has a second shop in L.A. and another in Buena Park, making an East Coast and Orange County. The latter takes over the space of another poke shop, but upon entering the Buena Park location, I realized Nishi had evolved beyond its title. The menu here also featured items known with pork, beef and chicken. And to the right of the register was a small display with prepackaged sushi orders that you can apparently also order as party platters.

The dining room at the Buena Park store was also more utilitarian than the one in L.A. A self-serve soda fountain stood in one corner, and empty to-go containers were stacked to the right of the outdoor Oca's downtown wall, glossy pictures of horses and gyms featured in both art and advertisement. But it was the presence of the hogged chips on a rack just as you'd find in a Subway that suggested the place isn't interested in being considered a full-on ramen temple. It was among the likes of Kinkaku, Shin-Sen-Den and Tiki-Ramen. Instead, it seems to be the Japanese-restaurant equivalent of a neighborhood diner that has something for everyone.

This isn't to say the ramen isn't worthy of being compared to the rest. Although the noodles were now uniformly thin and soft, the broth was a balanced blend of long-simmered, pot-stewed and soybean paste. Not too rich, too thick or too salty, this was decidedly a lighter tonkotsu broth than what's served elsewhere. It's even different than what I remember

being slurping at the Rancho Park branch. But when I ordered a bowl, the kitchen turned on the burner to boil up a serving of it in a small pot to ensure it scalds on the first sip. Once assembled, the ramen came with the familiar charred pork belly, a dash of soy, a scattering of green onions and a wisp of green I suspect were bell chiles.

If you order Nishi's vegetarian ramen expecting the depth of flavors that Shin-Sen-Den manages to achieve with its carbohydrate veggie bowl of noodles, you will be disappointed. Nishi's broth struggles to hit every note that Shin-Sen-Den's veggie soup sings with barely any effort. The tofu, corn and mushroom toppings will, however, make up the difference.

But if you're carnivorous, don't mind what I think is one of OC's best chicken karaages, which the kitchen will deep-fry into perfectly tender, juicy, lightly crisp morsels that never need the mayo-based dipping sauce the dish comes with. The fried chicken were excellent, too, served in thick, messy sauces that suggest they're actually cutlets.

And of course, you won't want to miss out on the seasonal ramen add-on of the web-based app—the poke smothering the trousseau balance between liquid and solid. It's done perfectly here, and it's a fitting symbol of how this growing chain has managed to walk the tightrope of two genres, yet still be good at both.

EDWIN GOE & **BARI**

EDWIN GOE & BARI
6242 South Blvd., Ste. A, Buena Park
(714) 522-2027, nishi-poke.com Open
Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Ramen, \$10.50
\$12.50, poke, \$10.50-\$14.95 No alcohol

WHAT THE ALE

by GREG NAGEL

OC Beer Week Returns

Of all the busy weeks of the year, we've granted 10 glorious, consecutive days devoted to locally made independent beer. The festivities start Friday and a multitude of daily events go until Cinco de Mayo. Here are my top picks:

The Fourth Annual OC Breweries Guild Invitational. This is the top-of-the-top festival: with each brewery creating another treat outside the cager, allowing attendees to sample the best of the best. 630 Lodge, 11811 Rock Ave., San Juan Capistrano, (714) 537-8228, ocbreweryguild.org. Sat., noon-4 p.m., \$25 (don't miss early bird for a new live concert). **Brews & Break.** Every brewery invited, here's a high-fives with various featured brewing guests. Sign up your team at (714) 699-2035, extension 226, Cosco's Brewing Center, 3369 E. La Habra Ave., Anaheim, www.ocbrewing.com. Sat., 1-5 p.m. & 10-12 p.m.

California Craft Beer Week. The California Beer Week and the California Beer Week. The California Beer Week is a special initiative drive that features two free-to-try and a beer world. **SanDiegoBrewing.** 2001 Avenida de los Carls, Ste. C, Laguna Hills, (949) 593-0932, www.sandiegobrewing.com. Wed., 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Only Top Informers. It starts Monday with Fresno's and Big Bear's. It continues Thursday with Orange County and San Diego, Wednesday with Antelope Valley and the West of the West and the last is the last. **Homebrew Club of OC.** 1005 Alhambra St., Orange, (714) 227-0092, www.ocbrewing.com.

Maybe Fourth Be With You. The Star Wars-themed party kick off with a 100% cold, costume contest, beer and more. **SanDiegoBrewing.** 2001 Avenida de los Carls, Ste. C, Laguna Hills, (949) 593-0932, www.sandiegobrewing.com. May 4, noon-10 p.m.

LETTERS TO OC BEER WEEK
Visit the OC Beer Week's website at ocbeerweek.com or on Facebook to become a member.





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LOU & MIKE

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Lou & Mike's refreshes the breakfast game on Los Coyotes

There's a quiet residential section of East Long Beach that, unless you live there or have an entrepreneurial appointment, you won't travel through too often. So for occupants of the well-contained little neighborhood, having a restaurant—any restaurant—was the black swan event. Furman's Italian Kitchen held their honor for well more than a decade, but the old-school Italian eatery closed about two years ago, leaving the only unbroken space in the immediate area vacant.

That's when the team behind the now-defunct River's End Café in Seal Beach, which was more a destination patisserie sweet to the beach and ocean view than the group-speak-type food, stepped in this past February.

Right from the start, it was apparent Mike and Candy Hulett had upped their game with Lou & Mike's. The timing, for one, is a neat improvement: The previous restaurant had largely and darkly swayed diner has been under way and presented a brighter white. It's clean, airy and minimalist. The outdoor patio, enclosed with glass and overlooking anyback-out single-level home, is spacious but still cozy and comfortable.

The menu is pretty identical to River's End's (one for a few tweaks, such as reintroducing the Bacon & Egg dish as the new de Luxe Omelette—fluffy white fill in a garlic-basil sauce served over eggs, by the way—after the street-side café sits out), with many areas keeping the same word-for-word description. But there's something about this new location—everything's somehow much better now. Consider it a rebirth. The place is better. The dishes are playing hot. The service is faster and more attentive. The kitchen keeps the defects on low-level grounds.

Lou & Mike's serves a modest assortment of lunch items, including fish and

LONG BEACH LUNCH

BY ERIN DEWITT

chips, enchiladas, and clam chowder, but at its heart, this is a breakfast joint. Open at 7 a.m., every day, the café closes by 3:30 p.m., during the week and an early-late Sunday 4:30 p.m. on the weekends.

Among the breakfast options, the house meachans come with craggy, seasoned, cubed potatoes topped with a swirl of orange-mustard, spicy sour cream. Three eggs are served with perfectly runny yolks over a heap of black beans and salsa, soft corn tortillas, house-made Cheddar sauce, with one side fiery red and the other a milder verde.

The Super Omelette is a choose-your-own-adventure dish. A host of morning options comes with an array of thin-rustic holding toppings such as brown sugar, milk, nut oil, a garnish, walnuts, blueberries and bananas. If you skip the milk, this is one of the only vegan options available, though there are plenty of vegetarian dishes, including the massive spinach omelette or the hamper-caring chilaquiles.

The coffee is thick and strong. And there's actual chilled cream served with it (no plant, non-temperature rules of espresso here, thank God). It's a nice touch.

So though the Hulett team is a local, beachfront venue for a casual one needed in a sleepy part of town, the downtown seems to be a business move in the right direction. And given the crowds even on cloudy midweek mornings, the locals are glad to have a neighborhood eatery again.

LOU & MIKE'S

3508 Los Coyotes Dr., Long Beach, (310) 420-8000, louandmikes.com



Wagyu of the Sea

Playground's dry-aged seafood

Rending the menu at Playground is usually accompanied by at least one quick Google search that somehow turns up with one result: a link to the menu you're already viewing. On my latest visit, there were two instances of food bewilderment that struck, so I asked: What the hell is a clamor with noddy? And a 17-day, dry-aged white sea bass? Is that a thing?

Luckily, the search results for the latter brought me to the name Josh Niland, a young Australian chef that is sort of a rock star when it comes to serving fish that has been dry-aged as though it's a piece out of life.

"Chef is really excited about his seafood right now, so he flew to Australia for a few weeks to work at a restaurant to learn the dry-aged technique," says manager and barman Brock Woodley.

Playground chef/owner Jason Quinn worked directly with Niland. "They believe water kills a fish's quality," Quinn says as he glibly flips through images on his iPhone. He shows us at least 26 photos and videos of dry-aged fish pairs, naming each species we don't get in the States. "They have this huge walk-in cooler with at least 50 King George Whiting on hooks, catfish, Spanish mackerel, and trays and trays full of other fish. The selection we get here is better in some ways."

But what does dry-aging/fermenting to the table? The first thing I noticed in the quality of the skin, it tastes on this

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW BY GREGG MACIEL

pepper-milled quality that, when broken, sounds as crunchy as a dry leaf. It resembles a pea crust with bits of brown sugar caramelized to a perfect crisp.

There's also the clamor white sea bass, dropping with jaws as I take the first bite. It's so steamed and succulent as Uncle Lou's fried chicken (still the only menu item you can't send back), and if there was ever such a thing as Wagyu of the sea, that is it. The next morning I discovered across your plate, leading you to subsequent bites of fishy, flavorful morsels.

Playground's beverage program is equally as strong as the food menu, with a trifecta of craft beer, wine and some of the best cocktails in the country. To mark, I thought of something glass-based to work with the buttery legumes that came with the fish, but Woodley offered up a light and bright Vagabond Miller cocktail, with Aloe Vera, Tropicana White Chateau, house-preserved lemon, Meyer lemon and lemon. It's sort of herbal and floral, with the kick of peppy triple adding to the spice of the whole thing.

I still don't know what the hell is with noddy.

PLAYGROUND

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STYLING: JESSICA KATZ/STYLING

See You at the Movies

What to watch at the 2019 Newport Beach Film Fest

BY AMEE MURILLO

Each year's programming for the Newport Beach Film Fest is stellar, so it makes sense that for its 20th anniversary, the organizers would bring yet another fantastic slate of films. The parties, the filmmaker Q&As, and red carpets are all engaging and fun side attractions to enjoy, but the films always come first.

Where's a triathlete to start when it comes to knowing what's especially good to watch this time around? Let this humble roundup be a start, a glimpse into some of the great films you can watch. Here's to 20 more years!

LOCAL STORIES

Any One of Us

Professional mountain biker Paul Baaspois was left paralyzed by a spinal cord injury after an accident, and this documentary follows Baaspois's determination to undergo physical therapy and slowly regain his motor functions, while trying to make the best out of the situation with his mental health intact. It was filmed partly in Laguna, with many locals appearing, including noted scientist and stem cell researcher (and sometime contender for Hans Reichenbach's congressional seat) Dr. Hema Khorram.

Honey West: The Gloria Fickling Story
One of the most impressive stories of the "you've never heard of" variety centers on

Laguna Beach's Gloria Fickling, who wrote a series of crime novels with her husband under the pseudonym G.G. Fickling. The book's heroine, Honey West, would be adapted for a television series in the 1960s starring Anne Francis, becoming one of the most beloved of all time. In this short doc, Fickling recounts her uphills and meeting her husband, as well as how she developed the first female answer to James Bond.

SEX AND LOVE STORIES

Down Her Shorts

This cheeky black-and-white film is a recent addition to the *FemaleVibe* lineup. The eight short narrative films feature female sexuality and love are meant specifically for adults (although probably less explicit than the *Don Savage* [uncut adult-film showcase] and so-called *Serpentine Eggs*, *Zombies and Robots*, *Library Blues*, *Enlightened Greeting*, *Reverse Frigidity*, *Oh! Talk*, *The Looking Ceremony* [3D Movement], *Leah's Queen*, and *Dressed for Pleasure*).

The Pink Wall

Starring one-half of the indie-film duo the Duplain brothers, the film's Friday Night Spotlight follows the relationship between two people: One Duplain and Ophelia Black (aka Tina Moulton) in love over six years, told through various moments that illustrate their mutual passion and love for each other. But to move matches forward,

it's increasingly clear how the weight of adulthood puts a strain on their relationship, a notion for me among Duplain films (Mark Duplain's film *The One I Love* premiered at the fest a few years ago).

DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL FEATURES

Day and Night

A young man's family is sent in a tangle after the patriarch suddenly commits suicide. When the man meets Katsunori, an orphanage worker, the two strangers become partners in saving his father and saving the children at the orphanage. (Laguna Spotlight)

DeadTactics

This comedy spoofs paranormal investigation shows, as a team of TV investigators are dispatched to a legendarily haunted mansion in Mexico. They are fully prepared to face the scares for the audience with their phony night gags and special effects, but the house in question has real scares in store, and it's up to the DeadTactics to survive until the next episode. (USA)

Let Me Introduce You to Sofia

This out-of-the-box romantic comedy happens to seem to be beloved, as the premise involves a devoted father to young Sofia, whom he must convince his overcast girlfriend, who doesn't like children, to like him. (Laguna Spotlight)

Movies

Previously seen at the Sundance Film Festival, this intense feature focuses on a band of exiled teens who form an alliance called "the Organization" and save the mothers with weapons on a remote but picturesque mountain. They eventually and physically train themselves for battle while enjoying the freedom of living on the margins. But after they capture an American engineer and keep him hostage, the real war is about to begin. (Columbian Spotlight)

Too Late to Die Young

A group of youths come of age in the summer of 1990, while Chile undergoes its own tumultuous social upheaval. (20th Film Spotlight)

FASCINATING SUBJECTS

This year's selection of documentaries especially piqued my interest. *Misdeeds of Gloria K. Gadiasi* shows the life and turbulent work of the sex-fi writer *Pasquale Love*. *The Story of a Band Called Lenny* tells the story of an indie band whose claim to fame was derided by an accident, sending each member to join the church. And *Gusker Almsaar: Playing With Fire* details the life and work of the Mexican City-born, East LA artist who died in 1989 of AIDS-related causes.

AMUNILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

For more information on screenings and show times, visit newportbeachfilmfest.com or find the special insert in this issue.

Vampira On the Loose in Hollywood

BY MATT COKER

Amendations. An ex-spatio listing of (Michele Fortino)lands in a system out some where the lines of nature do not apply. The Fish Commission, fishcommission.org. There, April 25, 2010, 6:6 PM to 10:21 PM.

Big Fish A son (Billy Crudup) tries to separate fact from fiction in the life story told by his dying father (Albert Finney), as a younger man, Owen McCoppin (Flora Robt. Greene), booktime.com Thurs., April 25, 2:35 A.M. 2:35 p.m. Sun. ABC.com 2:35 p.m.

Sidon & Adams. Shot over 25 years, this documentary is about the unlikely pairing of a harmonica master and a one-man band—before the latter suddenly disappears. At *Twelve*, 1100 Broadway St., Thurs., April 28, 7 p.m. **BCCT**

Senior Thesis Documentary Screenings. Student-made documentaries premiere and are also live streamed. Chapman University chapman.edu/docs/ Thurs., April 25, 1 p.m. Free. Newport Beach Film Festival. It's 20th anniversary celebration gets kicks off with John Dahl's new drama, *Lucy*. Newport Beach Film Festival Spring Night at Edwards Big Newport. www.newportbeachfilmfest.com. Thurs., April 25, 7 p.m. \$2000.

Babylon. The trials and tribulations of black youth in early 1980s London
The First Crown, thehighways.org
There, April 25, 1984 on \$1.68

Sleepy Hollow Ichnelid Crane (Johnny Depp) is sent to Sleepy Hollow to investigate three disappearances blamed on an apparition. **The Fishes** Green Archdiocese.org. **There, April 25, 10:00 a.m. Sun. 10:30 a.m. \$7.50**

Rief Juan. Recruited by the KGB in the 1950s, Juan Stanley was finally exposed after spying for the Russians for more than half a century. Directors

Get Dreamin' at Agency Ranch Agnes (542)221-5846. Open: Fri., call theater for show times and ticket prices.
High Life A father (Robert Forster) and his daughter live in isolation in desolation, where they struggle to survive. Art Theatre, artheatreagencyranch.org. Fri.-Thurs., July 2, 1:30 & 6:30 p.m. \$9-\$12.

Little Missols Anne and Bruce Thompson must decide whether to resume struggling illegal jobs so she can save the family home from foreclosure or her sister (Lily James) risks from an unplanned pregnancy. **The Fife Crew**, thefifecrew.com. **Fu & Min. Thurs., May 2, 2-5 p.m.** Sat., 2-5 p.m. Sun., 2-5 p.m. **37-52**

War Z A former UN employee (Brad Pitt) seeks to stop a zombie pandemic that is hopping across and governments and threatening the world. Santiago Canyon College, online.scholarship.com Fri, shows open, 8 p.m., screening, 8:30 post show, but first show, 6:30

2019 International Film Festival. In *A Sweet Place*, John Kozanski and Emily Blunt star as parents trying to protect children from narrators with ultra-sensitive hearing in a post-apocalyptic world. *Sundance Canyon College*, sundancecollege.edu/pubs/international-film-festival. *By: Karen Stone*

October 21, 2017 The life and works of celebrated Iranian-American composer and conductor Lari Bakstanzadeh. Presented in Persian/Urdu.

English subtitles, the film is followed by a discussion and audience Q&A, www.igcinc.org, 800-624-4777 or 610-291-0000. For RSVP required.

End: *Hearts of Paradise* Drawing winner Judith Hill and Indonesian composer Nyoman Mantra pull back the curtains on Gamelan, a traditional Indonesian music. A good-sounding piece includes director Lin Zhen and executive producer Julia Goss. TheSource.org, theSource.org

At: Palm Springs

Senior Thesis Cycle 4 Film Screenings: Films are subject to change, and the films are also live-streamed. Check www.university.chapman.edu/node/474 for more.

Fury Fished Entertainment Release Party See on the big screen the Orange County hardcore band's latest music video for "Angels Dear Satan" from their new album, as well as a film they have directed. The *Arde Ganga*, fishfish.com org, 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$25
Police Store • Police Store 2

Double Feature: A Hong Kong police inspector (Jackie Chan), who is framed for murder, takes on a crime syndicate to capture its leader and clear his name. In the sequel, the now-dishonored cop is about to vent away from law enforcement when he stumbles into a nervous-planis bomb-crowded party of Hong Kong. The *Fists Green*; the *Discos* are *Go-Set*. *Movie* 53-55

I Slapped the Devil! A couple (A.J. Bowen and Susan Burke) arrive stranded on Christmas at the home of the brother (Gust) (Payton). They discover someone trapped in the basement who may be... **MEN!** The Food Channel. **Refractments** are. For Sat.



Download R&R, Jr. + Live Accompaniment. Buster Keaton's 1933 silent classic starring as Warlow who Dean Cain performs the country folk live. The Fiddlers, thefiddlers.com. or, 800.448.6730

Bombs Away! Level Presents Plan 9 from Outer Space. Is Wood's ex-boyfriend still useful tomorrow? It's rich about alien surveillance, the dead, & destroying the Earth's living. *The Arts Column*, theartscolumn.org. Ent. 7 p in \$15

The Rocky Horror Picture Show The car of newsmen to David and Janet (Barry Bostwick and Susan Sarandon) breaks down near the entrance of Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry). Late shadows cast troops Midnight Madness performers. Art The site, rather a living hell each year. Set, 11-95 am. 88-517

Explores After-Raiding: No More Excuses. This documentary shows the upshots of parties/battles/speakers Tim Davis, Grammy winner Kirk Franklin, retired Raider Tim Brown and others. Various directors. www.reelcultural.com. Mon-Tue, 7 p.m. \$12.50.

Reveries: Tim Burton's 1989 personal comedy begins with a couple (Kevin Kline and Alec Baldwin) dying much too young, then returns to Burton's

genre (Michael Keaton) to rid their towns of the obnoxious, cynical rich who moved in. Coquettishly film-lovers transform the Fido lobby into Delta Dent's art gallery, and a strong-armed musical tribune presides the screenings. The Fido-Graeme checks its cinema



COUPON 29 THELMA FICTURSKI

A Star Is Born. In Bradley Cooper's 2018 feature directorial debut, he plays a seasoned musician who discovers and falls in love with a struggling artist (Lady Gaga). As her career takes off, he

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High Noon, March 1 WB Kane (Gary Cooper) defends the plowboys of townshill and his own new bride (Grace Kelly) when he faces a gang of killers with their leader (Jan MacDonald) whom the lawman sent up years earlier. **Starlight Drive-In City** also at **Starlight 4 Star Cinema** and **Starlite Theatre**.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban Directed by Alfonso Cuarón

Ready for a Purpose-Gospel Patron?
Ellen Neale, *Two short scenes of the*

Community Voice Documentary Film Screening. Each semester, film students produce short documents-

IT'S BACANE: East LA teen brothers (left) Danilo and (right) Dale choose to live their lives differently and wind up on opposite sides of the law. *Starlight Dreams*. *Cbc* about Starlight Dreams

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London Calling

The Chance Theater teams up with a British playwright for a historic matchup
BY JOEL BEERS

Twenty years ago this month, a group of earnest theatergoers in a tiny space in Anaheim Hills were wrapping up their first production, an original play whose title most of them probably have long forgotten. Meanwhile, nearly 5,500 miles to the east, British playwright David Hare was setting up the theater societies. After a meeting with Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard as the parent of post-World War II British playwrights, those of his plays made Broadway the year before and he'd soon or been nominated for nearly every prestigious writing award. He'd, two years before, he'd been knighted.

Two decades later, those thespians remain earnest, but they're no longer forgetful, because The Chance Theater has a regional, even national profile, by any measure, it's one of OC's greatest artistic success stories.

And Hare? At 71, he's still working plays, and he's had 10 films or TV scripts produced since 2000.

And it's finally time for them to meet: The Chance opens Hare's 1995 play *Slydog* this weekend. The chance is fascinating. While a hit for Hare, it also signaled a major shift in his writing. Long a force of Hare's seafaring class structure and Thatcherism, in *Slydog*, Hare demonstrated that while ideas were still important, the people selling those ideas were just as important.

As he wrote in his 2013 memoir, "Drama is not and cannot be a cartoon form of exhortation. It is about people, it is not about types."

That didn't sit well with the experimental, highly politicized theater in which Hare spent, not with many lefties who found a theory champion's line was wrong.

But the focus on people, not the political, is a key reason why Chance artistic director Cosh Nguyen chose *Slydog* as the first new American play he directed since 2013. "The problem are in there, is that you have a self-made character who's stuck in on making money and another one concerned with taking care of others as need, and when they talk about things like privilege and misogyny, it feels like this play could have been written today," Nguyen says.

While the play has a larger conversation, "it also looks at intimacy," he continues. "Usually do you see a play where true love is the obstacle, it's usually what [drives] a play."

Better than helping the older, free-



MANUS PLAINO

COURTESY OF CHANCE THEATRE

market-loving entrepreneur and his former lover, a female schoolteacher who works with underprivileged kids, together, how large their gap is in *Slydog*, Nguyen explains. There's why his focus isn't on amplifying the meaning of their words as much as what they "need from each other. What they're talking about are just tools and tactics," he says, but "their conversation—or lack thereof—that is more important."

Just as *Slydog* came at a pivotal point in Hare's writing career, his production comes at such a time for the Chance. It has grown to such a point that, including funding a contract to use union actors, paying everyone who works on a show and cultivating a generous donor base, it no longer has to worry about respect or whether it will make the next next month. It's no longer the indie engine that thinks it can't afford it. But, Nguyen says, that only means it's time to think about the next mountain. In five years, the lease expires, and the theater has an option to renew for another 10. That Nguyen likes the idea of owning a building that would include a 350-seat and a 100-seat theater (currently, its two spaces hold 100 and 50).

"We wanted [and] we created a lot," says Nguyen, who delayed starting a family with his wife until three years ago (they now have 2-and-a-half-year-

old twins). "But now we're starting to think about 'How do we get it to a place where it can survive without us?' We're talking about sustainability, and that's why the space is so important. I can't tell you how many theater companies have been destroyed by a lease."

But don't be surprised if, instead of moving somewhere such as Santa Ana's art district or the Point of North Orange County known as Fullerton, the Chance stays where it's always been—a flat, north-south part of Anaheim with its small, its connection with the rest of that town (including the rest of Anaheim HEAT) as South Coast Plaza has with South Ana.

"We didn't know it at the time, but this is an amazing place to be," Nguyen says. "If you're coming from South County, you take the toll road, which's pretty much ends at our front door. People from Riverside and Corona drive against traffic. It's so much closer to LA than South Coast [regional], and you don't have to deal with the 5 and 23 [freeways]. We feel very lucky to be here."

He really said that. About Anaheim Hills.

BEERS

BEERS

at the Chance Theater, 1032 E. La Habra Ave., Anaheim Hills, 92816-4212; chancetheater.com, Fri.-Sat., 5 p.m., Sun., 3 p.m. May 6: \$20-\$30

ARTS OVERLOAD

W ADMESE MURIELLO

April 26-May 2

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"PHOTO, PROTESTERS AND

PARADES" (Document the photography of Jim Coles and Robert Coles both of whom captured 1960s countercultural life, art, political rallies, protests and rallies on film. In Los Angeles, 4 p.m. Sat. 4 p.m. Sun. 4 p.m. 2015 Photo Parade, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.photoexpoexpo.com

YOUNG KARINER: CHERISHED LIVING & MASTER OF THE IMPOSSIBLE (The autobiographical performance about off to the coast and the coast region. 4 p.m. Sat., 4 p.m. Sun. 4 p.m. 2015 Karin, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.karinexpoexpo.com

IMAGINATION CELEBRATION (An event for the whole family with activities, activities in current exhibitions. Sat., 1 p.m. Sun. 1 p.m. 2015 Imagination, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.imaginationexpoexpo.com

THE NATION FOUND OF THE NATION (A series of events from film, writing to prose from James Joyce, 4 p.m. Sat., 4 p.m. Sun. 2015 Nation Found, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.nationfoundexpoexpo.com

"MOVING BEHIND THE BARBERS" (A series of events from film, writing to prose from James Joyce, 4 p.m. Sat., 4 p.m. Sun. 2015 Moving Behind the Barbers, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.movingbehindthebarbersexpoexpo.com

"MOVING BEHIND THE BARBERS" (A series of events from film, writing to prose from James Joyce, 4 p.m. Sat., 4 p.m. Sun. 2015 Moving Behind the Barbers, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.movingbehindthebarbersexpoexpo.com

PHYSICAL GRAPHICS (An event for the whole family with activities, activities in current exhibitions. Sat., 1 p.m. Sun. 1 p.m. 2015 Physical Graphics, Long Beach Convention Center, 300 N. Los Angeles, 90801-1000, www.physicalgraphicsexpoexpo.com



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AARON BARRETT AND HIS RED BIG GUITAR

Shining a Light on Ska

Documentary *Pick It Up!* examines the roots and revival of OC's sunniest music era
BY NATE JACKSON

Anyone who has ever had to argue the cultural merits of third-wave ska is inevitably questioned about the genre's authenticity. For decades after its mainstream run in the mid-'90s, this kind of scrutiny was woefully predictable, as the sunny club of brass and major-chord punk was thrust back underground by the powers that be. Little did many people know that this is where it lived the most, especially in Orange County. Six spent years living at home, reuniting its disbanded fan base while pulling in new generations of band proto-lookers for outdoor music made just for them.

Throughout third-wave ska's existence, films and matches (such as Taylor Meadows' decision to let it die). The Orange-based documentary film director and musician grew up emulating such bands as Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rancid, and No Doubt. As he watched new generations discover the music of his youth without any preconceived notions, he decided it was important to share the history of the music that defined the term that meant him—because somebody had to.

"I'd watched a ton of ska documentaries, but there hadn't really been one I'd seen about America, '90s, third-wave ska," Meadows says. "It was such a cultural phenomenon for so many people, but young people today don't really know about it, so we wanted to do something that could preserve that story and have it told by the people who lived it."

The result was *Pick It Up!*, an indie-house to a common phrase among ska

heads that generally means "pick up" the best of a song. From the simple explanation of ska terminology to the more nuanced reasons why the music vanished from the mainstream as quickly as it exploded, the documentary is a definitive time capsule on the origins of third-wave ska from the mouths of the people who created it, organized it and continue to stoke its creative fire. Through interviews with Mike Trunk of Warlock Punks, Angela Moore of Philboise, Goldfinger's John Feldmann, ska encyclopedia and radio personality Taryn Phillips, Tara Dancose of No Doubt, plus dozens of others, the film examines the way behind this genre's birth in OC and the East Coast and looks at its current home anywhere such as Mexico, Japan, and Europe.

"Ska never went away, but if you're watching the mainstream, you wouldn't have thought it did," Meadows says. "We started the movie in 2007, and we never could've predicted the back to the beach festival [in Huntington Beach] drawing 30,000 people to watch ska music upstart the Intermix festival [in Los Angeles] under 'Ska Invasion' started filming. Red Hot Chili Peppers and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones—two of the biggest, longest-lasting ska bands on either coast—have put out new albums. 'We had no idea how this was gonna be happening,'" Meadows says.

Narrated by Tim Armstrong of Rancid and ska/punk band Operation Ivy, the film opens with the image of bands popping a mix CD of third-wave ska into a dusty Magnatone Discman. The origins of what it took to become part of the zeitgeist

of the '90s are explained through migration and cultural change, touching on the evolution of original ska music in Jamaica and its migration to the U.S. via J-Tone and the cultural factors that led to ska being one of the most racially inclusive genres despite how it's often characterized after the second industry overtook it to the point of the second becoming a parody of itself. But even after the 2000s hit, people's affinity for bands such as Voodoo Glow Skulls, Dag D and the Skids Table, and Hootie helped keep ska's light alive.

"The scene was always for the word labels and the outsiders, and that gave people like me a sense of ownership over it and a sense of belonging," Meadows says. "It's not for everybody, I'd say that, but the people who love it really love it."

Part of *Pick It Up!*'s value is in its dedication to showing viewers where the re-emergence of third-wave ska went wrong, as well as how bands outside the U.S., such as Madder Vicious in Mexico and Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra in Japan, are keeping the torch burning. A member of the band the Pre-Posters, Meadows admits he learned a lot about the power of ska and, more important, the strength and connection of the community that it supports it. During the crew's first road trip to film interviews in Orange County, Meadows says, he and his crew were able to crash with ska heads who just wanted to help them out.

"We actually slept on Vibe's [Willy and Yellanda's] [Chickens] floor like Mike [Barrett] floor a little we were making this movie. It

felt like being a touring band in the '90s," Meadows says. "I had no idea the ska scene was so connected and thriving, even though I've been playing in bands on the East Coast for 30 years."

On Friday, *Pick It Up!* premieres at the Newport Beach Film Festival, just a few miles from where the second-annual back to the beach festival—called chickens! ska, one and hardware—will be going off the next day. Meadows has already staked out a spot for a back to the beach booth, from which he can meet fans, hang out with the Ruckuscore backers who helped him finance the film and thank a few of the bands for being part of Meadows's love letter to the genre. There will probably be more than a few recognizable local members whooping it up for the crowd at the Newport Beach Film Fest, we'll see.

Meadows hopes new ska fans will see his documentary and gain some valuable knowledge of the genre, then pick it up for themselves.

"I think the film is a testament to the genre and the fans and the community that [orange] ska heads wish they were a part of," Meadows says. "I imagine if you listen to the Intermixers, and start the first thing you've heard, you're probably gonna pick up a Ruckus album and go from there."

MIKEBOSCH@PICKITUP.COM

PICK IT UP!

screens on part of the Newport Beach Film Fest at the Lido Theatre, 3400 Via Lido, Newport Beach, CA 92643-4050; newportbeachfilmfest.com; Fri, 8:30 p.m. \$16.



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VERDUEROS AND GOLD
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WILL LARUE/OC WEEKLY

Keeping the Motor Running

The Verdueros rev up an old-school sound that's fun to drive
BY NATE JACKSON

Creating new fire out of classic combinations is the key to success for a band such as Verdueros. The name itself, in honor of the late-'60s Beatle color that blended green and gold into shimmering, workman-style retro perfection, was inspired by their mission to put the sounds of Amy Winehouse and Chuck Berry in a blender and pour it over their punk-rock roots. The result is a mix of classic and combustible cover tunes with heart, soul and edge. More months ago, former Cadillac Tramps members Brian Cackley (guitar) and Warren Bandrow (bass) joined forces with vocalist Marko Sweetwater, saxophonist Geoff Young and drummer Nick Colloffore. And this week-end, the group are cooking the New Blues Festival. We spoke with Cackley about how these local all-stars got their motor running.

OC WEEKLY: You guys are playing the New Blues Festival, but would you consider yourselves a blues band?

BRIAN CACKLEY: No, this band isn't like your regular grandma's blues band. We actually don't even really play much blues. We're doing a bunch of different covers that we more rock & roll and soul. We do Chuck Berry, Little Richard, an Amy Winehouse tune and one Cadillac Tramps song, a Rio Holiday song. We're playing ten pretty straight, too, but with our lineup, everything always comes out with a little bit of a bite. We're not playing punk either, but for whatever reason, it comes out with a bit of an edge.

How did the band come about?

Marko got me up maybe a year ago and said we should do an old-school rock & roll band, and it was one of those things that sounded cool, but we never talked about it again—and the Blasters were playing an after-hour Sunday at Goldfinger's, and Scott [Tucker] and Vinny [Tubbs], who run that place, and they needed an opener, something kinda special, so we literally

fanned the band to do that show.

How did you decide on the name Verdueros?

Marko suggested the name, and I said, "What's that?" and he sent me this old [for a Beatle] from the early 1970s—and it came out in this certain color they called Verdueros—it was like really green and dull gold, like green gold. It sounded like a cool name. What made you complain to start moving forward with the new band?

Warren and I decided to do this on a whim and have fun without any pressure, and when we played together at the first Verdueros practice, we walked out of there saying, "That was pretty cool. Let's do more of this, not just one show." Right now, everyone feels like this was gonna work. We're only played one show—and it was a photo-recall success. It meant out with us not thinking much about it, but then it blended in and really became a lot of fun.

What other bands on the members of Verdueros play in when you're not onstage together? Everybody in the band has serious projects. For Warren and I, I lead House is more of the serious project that we do together. Warren's also in Guy Arana and the Lonely Streets, which he's also committed to. Marko has the Marko Sweetwater Band, but he's also got a group called Coyotes del Barrio. And Geoff has the Legendary Swinger, and Nick has the Snake Oil Salvation. We're all super-committed to our main bands, but this project is his desert. You go to go and have fun and be relaxed, there's not a lot of stress or pressure, but we're still able to do it at a really high level. Our first show was on the main stage, and our second show was on the main stage of a festival.

NATE JACKSON/OC WEEKLY.COM

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perform at the New Blues Festival at the Hill Sports Complex, 15150 Goldenwood, Huntington Beach, www.ocweekly.com. Sat., 8 a.m.-6 p.m. \$40-\$25 All ages.

WILD FRILLS



Friday

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES BROWN'S FUNNY SMYRN
 7 p.m. \$10-\$12.25. Also for 2013. Kenyon St.
 Long Beach (949) 495-0000. www.kenyonst.com

ANOMALIE: ROCK ANNUALITY 8 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Donutarium. 600 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.donutarium.com

ARCHITECTS 9:30 p.m. \$20-\$35. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

NILSON AUDIO 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The West Theatre. 301 N. Spangrow St., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.westtheatre.com

SEX. ROCK 9 p.m. \$10-\$15. 20+ years. La Santa. 201 E. Third St., Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.lasantasanta.com

POLARIS: CARNIVAL BILLS, THE FANTASMS
 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. Santos. 300 E. Third St. (between 1st and 2nd) Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.santos.com

THE NIGHTS, ROBERT JOH & THE BRICKS, MAGNOLIA COLLECTIVE 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. The West Theatre. 301 N. Spangrow St., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.westtheatre.com

Saturday

BACK TO THE FRACK, FEATURING
BLONDIE, THE GOLDENBOYS, RYAN AND PINK
THE ADAMANTS, BAYE FESDO
 7 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

THE ENGLAND MEAT 8 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

KENNEDY HOLLOWAY, BLAZE, MASHIN-ON 8 p.m. \$10-\$15. La Santa. 201 E. Third St., Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.lasantasanta.com

POLYTRIA JUNE, VAN DUIT 9 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

ROBBY BROWN & THE LITTLE CUPPERS, THE
BARBERShop 9 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The West Theatre. 301 N. Spangrow St., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.westtheatre.com

SEABRACK 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. Santos. 300 E. Third St. (between 1st and 2nd) Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.santos.com

UTKRA: THE UNIT EXPERIENCE 10:30 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. Santos. 300 E. Third St. (between 1st and 2nd) Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.santos.com

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Sunday

BACK TO THE FRACK, FEATURING THE USED,
THE THEORY 30 AND ANTHONY GREENE
THE WEEKENDERS, THE LADY TRAMP 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

TECH MUSIC 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Observatory. 2013 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.theobservatory.com

WILLY DUBBER 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Observatory. 2013 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.theobservatory.com

WILD BELLS 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. La Santa. 201 E. Third St., Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.lasantasanta.com

Monday

1 PIVOTAL 8:30 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. House of Blues at Anaheim Gardens. 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Anaheim (714) 176-2500. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

IAN & BISC SHOW 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. The West Theatre. 301 N. Spangrow St., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.westtheatre.com

Tuesday

CHROMATICS, DETROIT, IN MARCH 8 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Observatory. 2013 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.theobservatory.com

Wednesday

BAYE FESDO, THE WINDS, LA BOB 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Observatory. 2013 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.theobservatory.com

DEKA FURNACE, GARY FRIDAY 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. La Santa. 201 E. Third St., Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.lasantasanta.com

Thursday, May 2

MEXYKANS, HAUNTED SUMMER, VERY
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MURKING, LOS BENTENSONS, KEVLA 9 p.m. \$10-\$15. La Santa. 201 E. Third St., Santa Ana (949) 273-1900. www.lasantasanta.com

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SANJA LARSEN, ANDREA 10 p.m. \$10-\$15. All ages. The Observatory. 2013 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (949) 551-0800. www.theobservatory.com

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TOKE OF THE WEEK

» JEFFERSON VANDILLIARD

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Pinkie is a weed word. The first time I heard anyone call them anything other than underwear was in a video I found on my laptop a short while I was 7. Even though my grandma was often an away from company a that was default overtimes to get a gift of it in talking about you, Girl's Day I told her to endorse Sherbinskis Pink Panties as some of the best flowers I have ever set on fire and smoked.

From the moment you get your hands on these perfectly scented buds, you'll be in love—I know I was. Make sure you've cleaned your pipe or grab a friend who can roll a perfect joy because buds that good are good deserves respect. Some day, when the earth isn't boiling over and people finally figure out how to let us all live, I imagine this will be the stress that helps bring about a new age of love and understanding. At the very least, we will all be stoned.

Get ready for a rush of creativity, euphoric bliss and maybe even a little sexual stimulation, if you're into that kinda thing.



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First In Show

Well Groomed brings candy-colored canines to Newport Beach Film Fest
BY LISA BLACK

From Southern California to upstate New York, South Carolina and Arkansas, *Well Groomed* takes viewers deep into a tiny niche of canine-related Americana. The feature-length documentary follows four dog-loving groomers over the course of a year as they push their craft into a competitive, technicolor art form. The constant red-sneezing and apparent grins as the poodles who are their models and beloved pets leave little doubt the dogs are as into it as the humans.

"I was motivated to tell this story because of a lot of loves," says first-time director Rebecca Stern. "The love of dogs (and cats!), the love of traveling around the U.S., the love of creative people, and of exploring something I had no idea even existed." Not many people have an inkling about creative grooming, "creative" for short, but somehow after seeing *Well Groomed*, you get the impression of course that courts, makes perfect sense. Despite being banned in some states and countries, the pooches competing in this film are absolutely cherished.

From a just-right original score by Dan Deacon featuring glockenspiel and vibraphones to the obvious trust established among Stern, director of photography Alexander Leves and the champion groomers as long drives from their homes to the competitions, it's an intimate and charming narrative into a world that is devoid of political sensitivity.

We meet Adriane Pope, the most charged-up about training; Nicole Nicole Jackson, Angel Knapke, O.G. of creative grooming and mentor who supplies fiercely vetted products for coloring and adorning the dogs; and inward-warmer to both look and creative grooming, Cat Opson of Dana Point.

"We've had a lot of people do documentaries or TV shows on creative," says Opson, who appears in the film with her companion Kobe. "And most of the time, the questions they're asking and the things they try to get you to say are really-TV type—really silly, a lot of drama. But there's not a lot of that in the creative grooming world."

Stern's queries make it clear from the get-go she wasn't interested in manufacturing any hoopla or hype. "You could tell that she honestly wanted to know the story and wasn't looking for drama," continues Opson, who notes Katrina Pitt (creativity is her first name) when we spoke among dozens of "poodles." "So I treated that" having a nice old time, even in your own home, seemed her during the filming, but she's happy



NOBE CHECKS OUT THE SURF IN DANA POINT

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with the final cut. "Really did a really good job of showing how everyone had pride and happy moments, everyone had and moments and disappointments—she did a good job of making you look disappointed but not a bad loser."

"I have to admit to two of great, as we kept everything almost too light," says the director. "We also filmed in very small places with many dogs around, so we knew the gear had to be flexible. At Alexander's suggestion, we also used a vintage Canon 11-5-68 mm lens that allowed us to focus closely into fur and eyes or at competitors without spooking the dogs."

"The dogs loved haircuts," adds Opson. "And they loved Alex, the cameraman, he was great with them. He was sensitive enough to see if he was getting too close, and if it made the dogs nervous, he would back up. Kobe sometimes is not into the really big canines like they have on *Jimmy Kimmel*." The two have appeared on the show numerous times for its annual Canine Costume Parade. *Kimmel* makes a joke each time about a woman named Cat who grooms dogs. One year, Opson created a Scooby-Doo theme, with a costume

chasing the dog on the dog, prompting the host to make an *Inception* joke.

Well Groomed was completed in February and had its world premiere the following month at SXSW Film Fest. "They put us all up in the same house, as I got to meet Nicole [Jackson] and her husband," says Opson. "They're a really fun couple. One of my favorite moments on the movie was when Nicole and her husband were talking and saying (during the presentation), and he put his hand on her shoulder and rub her shoulder so supportively. It's so sweet, such a sweet moment."

The presentation portion of the creative competitions at the most baffling part, headshot last a little cheapy (also "business down") is called, the judges make a close inspection of the coloring and cutting techniques. Then friends or family members wearing costumes join in with a song or ambience or props in hopes of the coveted People's Choice award, which comes with a monetary prize and a crown chosen on Groomer to Groomer magazine.

"There are only two rules," explains Opson. "You can only have two main characters, and you're not allowed to bring any

art into that area's dogs—because that's happened before. Someone brought a bunch of snakes. She had real snakes, and she had a bite snake in the basket with the real snakes, and she threw that bite snake into the audience, and people were terrified. So they made the rule so were animals that are not dogs."

Nobe and Opson have taken a break from creative competition since shooting *Well Groomed* finished, and his multiple team have finally grown out to white "but with the film festival happening," Opson says about the dog-friendly screenings, "I gave him a rainbow Melrose and a rainbow cut." He'll be at both NEFF screenings if you want to get an autograph, a prize, or a head lick.

LIKABLE @POWERWEEKLY.COM

WELL GROOMED

screened as part of the Newport Beach Film Festival at the Inverness Beach Film, 1599 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, Sat., 2:30 p.m. at THE LOT's theater 3, 300 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, Mon., 12:30 p.m. For more information about the festival, visit www.newportbeachfilmfest.com

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Glew has advised numerous clients in Cannabis licensing all over the State of California. Acting as Lead Counsel for the Santa Ana Cannabis Association, he's also co-founder of the California Cannabis Bar Association.

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